

Washington Scene By George Dixon

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CIA (Certain Ignorance Assumed)

AS DIRECTOR of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allan Dulles naturally knows all. But this omniscience apparently has not rubbed off on Mrs. Dulles.

The wife of our top secret agent was among those present at a high-toned dinner in the Sulgrave Club the other evening. The guests were assigned to tables at which there were place-cards.

The life's companion of Uncle Sam's No. 1 private eye found herself at the same table with Mary Mundt, charming wife of Sen. Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota; Sen. George W. Malone of Nevada, and Sen. John M. Butler of Maryland—so you can see it was no free feed at the gospel mission.

When all were seated, Mrs. Dulles was seized with an unwanted attack of bonhomie. "Now," she cried, chummily, "Let's get acquainted!"

Mrs. Mundt looked askance because she had met Mrs. Dulles at countless Capital functions, including White House and other official state dinners. Moreover, Mrs. Mundt's husband is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee without which Dulles' outfit couldn't afford a cloak or even a dagger. But the Senator's lady managed to contain herself.



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TO GAIN TIME in which to get over the temporary annoyance, Mrs. Mundt opened a conversation with Senator Malone. But Mrs. Dulles was determined to be democratic. She chirruped gaily: "Let's look at each other's place-cards!"—and picked up the card of the grande dame from South Dakota.

"Mrs. Mundt—" Mme. Dulles read slowly. "Where are you from, Mrs. Mundt — New York?"

The senior Senator's helpmate took a new grip on herself. "No," she replied, "I am from South Dakota but I spend considerable of my time in Washington."

"Indeed? Is your husband connected with the Government?"

Mrs. Mundt frowned. Out of the corner of her mouth she whispered to one of the men at the table: "Shall I let her get away with this?" The latter, an uncharitable fellow, whispered: "No!" Out loud, Mrs. Mundt replied that her husband was in the Government—"in a way."

The mock humility missed its target completely. "That's nice," Mrs. Dulles said patronizingly. "Have you been in Washington long?"

Mrs. Mundt's illustrious spouse served five consecutive terms in the House. He is now on his second term in the Senate, and his face—usually with a pipe or cigar in it—is familiar to millions from the televised Army-McCarthy hearings.

But all Mrs. Mundt replied was: "Fifteen years." Then she counted 20 and asked: "Is your husband with the Government, Mrs. — er — Dulles?"

IT WAS NOW the turn of the chief intelligence mission to frown. "Why yes," she replied superiorly, "he is director of the CIA."

"What does that stand for? I just can't keep track of all these alphabetical agencies."

By this time, occupants of adjacent tables, at which were Vice President Richard M. Nixon; Senate Minority Leader William Knowland, and Teddy Roosevelt's daughter, "Princess Alice" Longworth, were beginning to dart quizzical sideways glances.

In a choking voice, Mrs. Dulles explained what "CIA" stood for. Mrs. Mundt assumed her most innocent expression and went on: "Your name is familiar, Mrs. Dulles. Are you related in any way to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles?"

"He's my husband's brother!" rasped Mrs. Dulles.

With an expression of ineffable sweetness, Mrs. Mundt then delivered the coup de grace. She swept her other table companions with a look of guilelessness that tore them apart, and remarked to the well-night apoplectic Mrs. Dulles:

"My! Isn't it wonderful that two brothers should both have such high positions in the Government!"

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